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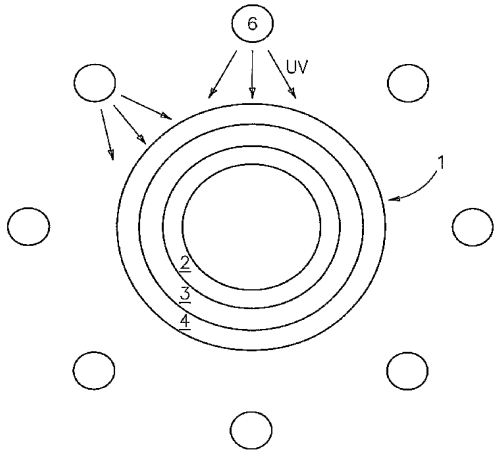
(54) Title: PHOTOSENSITIVE PRINTING SLEEVES AND METHOD OF FORMING THE SAME



(57) Abstract: The photosensitive printing element of the invention comprises a hollow cylindrical support layer (2), at least one layer of photopolymerizable material (3), and a masking layer (4). Portions of the masking layer are removed by laser radiation. The layer of photopolymerizable material (3) is then exposed to actinic radiation through the hollow cylindrical support layer (2) to create a floor layer of polymerized material. Next, the sleeve is exposed to actinic radiation to polymerize portions of the layer of photopolymerizable material (3) revealed during removal of the masking layer (4). The photosensitive printing element is then developed to remove the masking layer (4) and unpolymerized portions of the layer of photopolymerizable material (3) to create the relief image. The source(s) of actinic radiation may also be collimated so that the actinic radiation strikes the surface of photosensitive printing sleeve at an angle that is substantially perpendicular to the surface of the photosensitive printing element at the point of impact.

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